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The Grad Post Double Eagle Spotlight Fall 2018

November 6, 2018



Memory Littles, M.Ed.

Director
Office of Student Activities
Georgia Southern University

Q: Tell us what being a Georgia Southern Double Eagles means to you?

A: Being a Georgia Southern Double Eagle means being so committed to and confident in the institution that prides herself in the holistic development of students, that you return for a double dose of quality, higher education.

Q: How has becoming a Georgia Southern Double Eagle helped you professionally?

A: Becoming a Georgia Southern Double Eagle has helped me to gain a more well-rounded understanding of the inner workings of an institution of higher learning, while in a familiar environment. Choosing to obtain a second, advanced degree from the same institution allows you to bypass the initial steps of getting acclimated to a new environment and allows you to fully immerse yourself into the campus community.

Q: Why would you tell someone to join you as a Double Eagle?

A: I would tell them, join me as a Georgia Southern Double Eagle and reinvest in the institution that helped shape your future.

Q: What have been some benefits for you, or what do you feel are the benefits of becoming a Double Eagle?

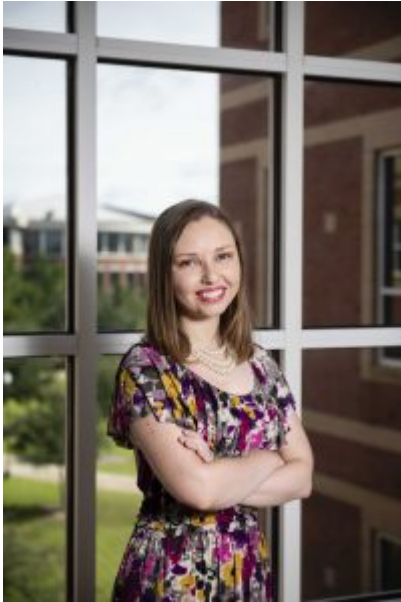
A: The benefits of being a Georgia Southern Double Eagle are not only being better positioned for advancement in my professional career, but also the opportunities to connect with other Alumni that are equally committed to the institution. More often than not, Double Eagles tend to be included and more actively engaged in conversations that have a direct impact on the campus and Statesboro communities.

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The Grad Post Student Spotlights for Fall 2018

November 6, 2018



Courtney Smith

Graduate Program: [Ed.S. School Psychology](#)

Undergraduate Degree: Bachelor of Science in Education – Early Childhood Education

Undergraduate University: Georgia Southern University

Length of program: 3 years

Q: What drew you to Georgia Southern University?

A: The most influential experience in my deciding to become a school psychologist was my experience teaching Kindergarten. During my years teaching, I quickly saw the importance and benefit of early intervention in mediating academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and other developmental concerns in young students. I saw many of my students thrive and overcome great obstacles when they were afforded interventions, services, and supports early in life. In advocating for some of my students, I had the opportunity to work with school psychologists and learn more about this field. I quickly knew that this was my best path to further improving educational experiences and life outcomes for a variety of students.

When I settled on pursuing a career in School Psychology, Georgia Southern was the obvious choice. Between the excellent reputation of the College of Education and the NASP (National Association of School Psychologists) approved status of the School Psychology program, I felt confident this would be the best program to prepare me for furthering my career in education. I began communicating with Dr. Dawn Tysinger about my interest in the program and her responsive nature sealed my decision. Her pride in the program was evident and it only increased my excitement for pursuing this field of study at Georgia Southern.

Q: What are your Georgia Southern “points of pride”?

A: Georgia Southern has the only NASP approved Ed.S. program for School Psychology in our state. Our program’s alignment and connection with both NASP and GASP (Georgia Association of School Psychologists) has been extremely beneficial in providing me opportunities beyond our coursework and field experiences. Since August 2017, I have served as the Georgia Southern student representative on GASP’s executive board. In May 2018, I received the “Advocacy in Action” scholarship from NASP to support my attendance at their annual Public Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. GASP provided financial support for my travel and I spent three days learning about advocacy and relevant legislation at George Washington University and putting newly attained advocacy skills in practice on Capitol Hill. Learning from and with professionals and experts in our field at the institute is my most memorable graduate experience.

Q: Tell us about your research.

A: I am currently in the process of obtaining approval for and conducting my Action Research project. My research focuses on the effectiveness of bibliotherapy as an intervention for childhood anxiety in the school-based setting. I utilize bibliotherapy in many of my counseling groups within the school. School psychologists are required to implement research-based interventions throughout their practice, so I thought researching an intervention in which I see much promise and potentially adding to its research base would be beneficial to my future practice and our field.

Q: How is Georgia Southern preparing you for your future career?

A: Georgia Southern has prepared me for my future career in many ways. First and foremost, I personally believe my training has been second to none. I feel confident in entering the field and beginning comprehensive practice immediately upon graduation. Another vital way in which Georgia Southern has prepared me is through networking and building connections. My cohort is very close. Though we are now scattered across the Southeast, we remain in touch and the bond we formed during our time in the program cannot be quantified in its benefit to each of us in our practice. Our program also has an excellent mentoring program that has allowed me to build connections across cohorts. School Psychology can often be an isolating field. A single school psychologist may serve an entire school system and this can lead to burn out and lack of available support from

professional peers. Having these relationships with my peers from the program and faculty members as well will be an invaluable resource as I begin practice.



Vaughnette Goode-Walker

Graduate Program: [Master of Arts, History](#)

Undergraduate Degree: Political Science – History

Undergraduate University: Morris Brown College

Length of program: 2 years

Vaughnette Goode-Walker established the Footprints of Savannah Walking Tour Company, in 2009, to educate visitors and local residents about the rich and diverse history of Savannah. She is currently the Director at the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum. In 2014, she conducted the research necessary to re-interpret the King-Tisdell Cottage, a Black History House Museum, in Savannah. Goode-Walker is the former director of Cultural Diversity of the Telfair Museums. She also worked as Assistant Curator of Education at the Telfair's Owens-Thomas House to introduce the social history of its former inhabitants — white and black; men, women and children; free and enslaved.

Goode-Walker's research skills are extensive. She is co-author of the book series Civil War Savannah, which includes Brokers, Bankers, and Bay Lane, a

history of urban slavery in Savannah. The book received the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board, 2012 Archives Award for Excellence in Research.

In addition to her experiences with public history, Goode-Walker worked as a broadcast journalist for ABC Radio/TV, CNN, and CNN International. She is a renowned poet whose first poetry collection, *Going Home*, was published in Spring 2010. Goode – Walker also taught History at her Alma mater, St. Vincent's Academy, in Savannah, Georgia.

Her community involvement includes: Visit Savannah, board chair; Savannah Chamber of Commerce Board; Tourism Advisory Committee, chair; Friends of Massie Board; and the Ossabaw Island Foundation.

Q: What drew you to Georgia Southern University?

A: Determined to finish what I started and because of its growing reputation, I returned to Armstrong to complete my Master of Arts in History. Working in local Museums I have encountered recent graduates who are working in the field and spoke highly of it. I also remembered the comfortable learning environment and the classes being the perfect size. It's been a great experience being in this academic community. The selection of classes have been perfect with the help of my advisor Dr. Christopher Hendricks.

Q: What are your Georgia Southern "points of pride?"

A: The Architecture class from Dr. Hendricks and really learning to "read a building."

Thanks to Dr. Knoerl "digital history" is the best!

If I could do another degree, it would Geography! Dr. Amy Potter's "Introduction to the Geography of Tourism" was a game changer for my work in Tourism.

I now understand how to read "historic letters" because of Dr. Ebel's class.

The History of Africa since 1800 filled in the history blanks and Dr. Nti brought it all together.

Q: What is one thing you are most proud of during your time here at Georgia Southern?

A: The one thing I am most proud of is being able to read the scholars, do the research and write the History that I am working with in my career.

Q: Tell us about your research.

A: I have continued with other research projects while in school. I completed the research for the Historic Marker for Carver State Bank Founder, Louis B. Toomer and was part of the group of local historians looking at the 1872 history of the Confederate Statue in Forsyth Park.

Q: Tell us about your internship.

A: My Internship is planned for next semester. However, I had the opportunity to work with recent Graduate Matthew Dantzler. He selected to do his internship at the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum. Mr. Dantzler performed well, doing research for the expanded exhibit being planned at the Museum. By the end of his time there he was greeting guests and giving tours. I would say he is an excellent example of the many success stories in the History Department.

Q: How is Georgia Southern preparing you for your future career?

A: Georgia Southern has really prepared me for the future with its focus on the Digital Age. Working on this degree has been ideal as I continue to advance my work in Public History.



Katie Slusher

Graduate Program: [Doctor of Clinical Psychology, Psy.D.](#)

Undergraduate Degree: Psychology, B.S.

Undergraduate University: Mercer University

Length of program: 5 years

Q: What drew you to Georgia Southern for your graduate studies?

A: I applied to Georgia Southern's Psy.D. program because it combines the best features of a PhD program (research opportunities, small cohorts) with the benefits of a Psy.D. program (focus on clinical skills and application). I also was drawn to the program's rural focus as they emphasized training providers for under-served and rural areas. When I arrived at Georgia Southern for program interviews, I immediately fell in love with the campus and felt at home. The faculty were welcoming and I knew I would gain valuable research and clinical opportunities while receiving helpful mentorship.

Q: What are your Georgia Southern "points of pride?"

A: My Georgia Southern "point of pride" is my dissertation. I conducted multiple six week parent training groups with members of the community in an attempt to reduce child behavior problems and parental stress while increasing resilience in children. I gained valuable experience in research as I was able to write the treatment manual and then implement the interventions on a biweekly basis for 8 months. While I enjoy research, I found the most meaning in providing a valuable resource for the community as many families may have limited access to evidence-based treatments. Watching families grow and learn together has been an immensely rewarding experience and I am hopeful this program will become a recurring group through the Georgia Southern Psychology Clinic which provides services on a sliding scale.

Q: Tell us about your research.

A: In my four years I have been a part of two labs conducting research on various topics including substance abuse and mindfulness as well as childhood trauma and religiosity. For the past two years I have been conducting my dissertation which examined the role of behavioral parent-training on child behavior problems and parental stress. I also wanted to incorporate a positive focus, so I included resilience interventions (e.g., self-esteem, optimistic thinking) to determine if these benefitted children and families. For eight months I ran biweekly groups with community members in six-week rotations to determine if my interventions reduced child behavior problems and parental stress and increased child resilience.

Q: Tell us about your internship.

A: I have spent the previous three years engaged in clinical practicum experiences at various locations including the Georgia Southern Psychology Clinic, the Regents Center for Learning Disorders, a behavioral pediatrics practice, and an elementary school on Fort Stewart. I have provided individual and group therapy to individuals ranging from preschool to older adult. I have learned to effectively implement a wide range of techniques to help clients reach their goals as well as how to work with a team to provide integrated, coordinated care.

Q: How is Georgia Southern preparing you for your future career?

A: After four years of study, students in clinical psychology apply for a fifth-year pre-doctoral internship as the final requirement before graduation. Our program goes above and beyond in preparing us for this internship because we receive a wide variety of clinical experiences as well as thorough formal training. We also have a Professional Development course which is designed to prepare us for everything from internship to licensure and beyond. This course has been so helpful that the majority of students in the last two years have received their first-choice internship. Beyond internship, we have had numerous guest lecturers who have provided valuable insight on various career paths. Overall, our Psy.D. program produces prepared, qualified, and competitive candidates for internship and beyond.

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